

Maine Revised Statutes
Title 18-A: PROBATE CODE
Article :

§5-805. DECISIONS BY SURROGATE

(a). A surrogate may make a decision to withhold or withdraw life-sustaining treatment for a patient who is an adult or emancipated minor if the patient has been determined by the primary physician to lack capacity, no agent or guardian has been appointed or the agent or guardian is not reasonably available and the patient is in a terminal condition or a persistent vegetative state as determined by the primary physician.

A surrogate also is authorized to make any other health care decision for a patient who is an adult or emancipated minor if the patient has been determined by the primary physician to lack capacity and no agent or guardian exists, except that a surrogate may not deny surgery, procedures or other interventions that are lifesaving and medically necessary.

A medically necessary procedure is one providing the most patient-appropriate intervention or procedure that can be safely and effectively given.

[1999, c. 411, §2 (AMD) .]

(b). Any member of the following classes of the patient's family who is reasonably available, in descending order of priority, may act as surrogate:

(1). The spouse, unless legally separated; [1995, c. 378, Pt. A, §1 (NEW).]

(1-A). An adult who shares an emotional, physical and financial relationship with the patient similar to that of a spouse; [1999, c. 411, §3 (NEW).]

(2). An adult child; [1995, c. 378, Pt. A, §1 (NEW).]

(3). A parent; [1995, c. 378, Pt. A, §1 (NEW).]

(4). An adult brother or sister; [1995, c. 378, Pt. A, §1 (NEW).]

(5). An adult grandchild; [1995, c. 378, Pt. A, §1 (NEW).]

(6). An adult niece or nephew, related by blood or adoption; [1995, c. 378, Pt. A, §1 (NEW).]

(7). An adult aunt or uncle, related by blood or adoption; or [1995, c. 378, Pt. A, §1 (NEW).]

(8). Another adult relative of the patient, related by blood or adoption, who is familiar with the patient's personal values and is reasonably available for consultation. [1995, c. 378, Pt. A, §1 (NEW).]

[1999, c. 411, §3 (AMD) .]

(c). If none of the individuals eligible to act as surrogate under subsection (b) is reasonably available, an adult who has exhibited special concern for the patient, who is familiar with the patient's personal values and who is reasonably available may act as surrogate.

[1995, c. 378, Pt. A, §1 (NEW) .]

(d). A surrogate shall communicate the surrogate's assumption of authority as promptly as practicable to the members of the patient's family specified in subsection (b) who can be readily contacted.

[1995, c. 378, Pt. A, §1 (NEW) .]

(e). If more than one member of a class assumes authority to act as surrogate and they, or members of different classes who are reasonably available, do not agree on a health-care decision and the supervising health-care provider is so informed, the supervising health-care provider may comply with the decision of the class having priority or a majority of the members of that class who have communicated their views to the provider. The health-care provider may refer the members of the class or classes to a neutral 3rd party for assistance in resolving the dispute or to a court of competent jurisdiction. If the class is evenly divided concerning the health-care decision and the supervising health-care provider is so informed, that class and all individuals having lower priority are disqualified from making the decision.

[1995, c. 378, Pt. A, §1 (NEW) .]

(f). A surrogate shall make a health-care decision in accordance with the patient's individual instructions, if any, and other wishes to the extent known to the surrogate. Otherwise, the surrogate shall make the decision in accordance with the surrogate's determination of the patient's best interest and in good faith. In determining the patient's best interest, the surrogate shall consider the patient's personal values to the extent known to the surrogate. A consent is not valid if it conflicts with the intention of the patient previously expressed to the surrogate.

[1995, c. 378, Pt. A, §1 (NEW) .]

(g). A health-care decision made by a surrogate for a patient lacking capacity is effective without judicial approval.

[1995, c. 378, Pt. A, §1 (NEW) .]

(h). An individual with capacity at any time may disqualify another, including a member of the individual's family, from acting as the individual's surrogate by a signed writing or by personally informing the supervising health-care provider of the disqualification.

[1995, c. 378, Pt. A, §1 (NEW) .]

(i). A surrogate may not be an owner, operator or employee of a residential long-term health-care institution at which the patient is receiving care unless the surrogate is one of the following:

- (1). The spouse of the patient; [1995, c. 378, Pt. A, §1 (NEW) .]
- (2). An adult child of the patient; [1995, c. 378, Pt. A, §1 (NEW) .]
- (3). A parent of the patient; or [1995, c. 378, Pt. A, §1 (NEW) .]
- (4). A relative of the patient with whom the patient has resided for more than 6 months prior to the decision. [1995, c. 378, Pt. A, §1 (NEW) .]

[1995, c. 378, Pt. A, §1 (NEW) .]

(j). A supervising health-care provider may require an individual claiming the right to act as surrogate for a patient to provide a written declaration under penalty of perjury stating facts and circumstances reasonably sufficient to establish the claimed authority.

[1995, c. 378, Pt. A, §1 (NEW) .]

SECTION HISTORY

1995, c. 378, §A1 (NEW). 1999, c. 411, §§2,3 (AMD).

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